

The Brethren Evangelist

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POINTS CORRESPONDENTS SHOULD REMEMBER.

1. This paper is the Organ of the Brethren Church.
2. The New Testament is the accepted and exclusive authority of Church Government.
3. Faith in Christ and Reformation from Sin, Trine Immersion, Supper and Communion, Washing Feet, and the Bible as the only rule of Faith and Practice are principles belonging to the name Brethren, and to be received by all churches as essential evidence of fellowship in the Brotherhood served by this paper.
4. The Local Congregation is recognized as a volunteer society, organized for ecclesiastical purposes that the membership may aid each other in divine things, as a part of the one body of Christ; and as such, as independent of other congregations and competent to adopt rules and regulations for its own internal management and discipline in harmony with the New Testament.
5. Reports of church trials and censures do not interest the churches, and will not be published, except in cases of flagrant crime against society and the faith, for the protection of the churches in general.
6. The editors do not hold themselves responsible for the views of correspondents, and consider themselves under no special obligation to publish the communications of any one; and do not suppose the earth will stop and the church fall to atoms if you are not heard, and no favoritism is known.
7. Write plainly upon one side of the sheet only, and do not mix matter demanding immediate publication, with essays and comments; make church news brief, keep out personal reflections, state other denomination, and try to adapt yourself to the convenience of the publishers.

ASHLAND, Ohio, Aug. 21, 1889.

One in God.

When the pall began to draw down over the eventful life of the Redeemer of Men, he lifted a remarkable prayer to the Father in behalf of his disciples. It is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. The chapter is remarkable because it is a sermon preached to God. The man so fortunate as to be permitted to read that sermon should glorify the name of the Father so great a privilege is conferred upon mortal man. The whole chapter is addressed to God. It is a prayer in behalf of those he loves. There are many beautiful lessons contained therein for edification and comfort.

First, the Saviour is so greatly concerned about the men the Father had given him out of the world. No mother ever had a stronger feeling of solicitude for her beloved children than Christ had for his disciples. Notice the situation. It was just before the crucifixion, and the knowledge was present with him that Peter should deny him and the flock should scatter. Yet he loved them with a love more endearing and simple than is possible for ordinary men to exercise.

Second, we notice one of the petitions in his prayer-sermon to God. He says: 'Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one.' There is a great weight of meaning in the last words of the language—that they may be one as we are one.

God desires that his worshippers shall be one in the manner and object of their devotion. Paul beautifully elaborates upon the principle: 'There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God the Father of all.'

Seeing then that Christ prayed

for unity among his beloved disciples, and Paul recognizes only one right way and a oneness in all the deeds of righteousness from whence then, cometh all these divisions, separations, heart pangs in rending asunder the fellowship of years and breaking the tender cord of filial affection, made strong by union in the service of God? Can these divisions proceed from the Father? Has he designed that men, seeking to be holy, shall be thus divided in their pilgrimage and look with disdain upon the teachings that each other hold? It can not be. God is one; Jesus prayed that we might be one, and all true servants of God desire in their hearts the unity of the little flock of Jesus.

Whence, then, cometh divisions, wars, rebellions, secession? They come from the devil. The devil is the author and instigator of all division and discord. He has set his emissaries in every body of believers, and the world seeking Christ is tormented by their evil deeds.

There is one body, and Christ is the one and the everlasting head. All other heads are satan-heads. Romanism has a personal apostate head and anti-Christ. In these late times Protestant churches have a confederate apostate head and anti-Christ. Legislative Conferences, Annual Meetings, Assemblies, are more the agents of hell than an auxiliary in the developing of truth. They are the creator of dissension, division, discord, the fruits of sin through their father the devil. From whence is sprinkling and pouring as baptism? From Catholic Councils. From whence is purgatory or the anti-scriptural intermediate state? From Catholic councils. From whence are all the authoritative doctrines of the various sects constructed out of the theories and dogmas of men. From conclaves, councils, assemblies and the like, made to overthrow the headship of Jesus Christ and destroy the oneness in God.

The argument may be offered in rebuttal that those legislative religious bodies only prevent greater division. Prevent what? Imagine for a moment the universal prevalence of the New Testament system. The United States without a single religious hierarchy. Each one would go to the Bible to prove his position. There would be no responsibility to any higher body except Christ, and no obligation to maintain an authoritative doctrinal code. Behold the freedom under such a system! There would then be no occasion of using the devil's popularity argument to sustain a religious dogma. There would then be no appeal to what our discipline says, what our creed requires. The consciences of men would gail under no shackles of slavery, and the Bible, the Bible only would be the universal authority and object of appeal. What would this lead to? It would lead to an investigation of the Bible and to One in God. There could be no more views than there are now. There are more than a thousand sects in the world now who base their religion on the Bible. There could be no more theories if every hierarchy on the earth was in hell where they belong, and the acknowledged book of authority, the Bible, would gradually lead men to a

oneness in God. The experiments of other men open to study proves this. In controversy we come to an understanding of the position taken by an opponent, and one of the other will ultimately accept the views of the other, where the conscience is not deadened by a scorn allegiance to some dogmatical system. Instead of this, the hierarchy shuts off discussion and compels division.

Again, under this system there could be no difference of essential consequence upon the practices of the Lord's house. Men never did differ essentially upon those practices when they were left to their own good judgment and the word of God. Of course all along the way of time men will come up with peculiar views, but if those views are not clothed in legislative authority by some conference or hierarchy, when the men die, the views die also, and no disturbance is left behind. Satan has been trying to manage the church for centuries and he has made a shameful failure of it.

The Saviour most heartily desires that his children should be one in God. He hates divisions and hates every one who causes them. Man headship in religion is the cause of it all. There is no other cause of division. They are contrary to every precept of his gospel and therefore can not have the sanction of God. Jesus desires unity in his rank and every true follower of Jesus desires it also, and will give his influence in its behalf. Anti-Christ's love division that they may be the chief monks of the cloister.

The evidence being so strong that divisions are not of God, the children of the kingdom should work for unity. Not indeed for a paring away of the ordinances of the gospel, but for unity on the gospel alone, and no heads but Christ.

Bible Regeneration.

At the present time a warm controversy is in progress in the *Church Advocate*, the organ of the People of God. One point we notice in the controversy is the prominence given to the old doctrine of some wonderful, inconceivable, mysterious, incomprehensible revolution taking place in the man when he decides in his heart to live a better life. We have often been puzzled to know where there was authority for anything of the kind.

Regeneration, *palingenesia*, occurs only twice in the New Testament; namely, Matt. 19:28, and Titus 3:5. Again born is the literal translation of the word. Matt. 19:28 reads:

'And Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto ye, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.'

Ye which have followed me in the rebirth. What can this mean? Shall the past tense of the verb be understood to mean that the language only applies to the twelve apostles? But notice the language: 'In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.' The language means the new birth day, and the simple language is, He who having followed me in the new birth day, shall sit upon twelve thrones. The fact that the apostles inquired what their

reward should be for their sacrifice, and the language of the verse plainly shows that the resurrection was referred to. This regeneration is then plainly arising from the dead to meet Christ and not a change men undergo now.

In Titus 3:5, nothing is done with regeneration. It is only the washing that is considered as an operating force. The Holy Spirit and the bath are here united with the mercy of God in saving men from their transgressions past. Paul says he saved us. This can not be taken to mean that they were eternally saved, because he said that he might become a castaway. It was the salvation from past sins he alluded to. Paul here says just this much: God saved us by his mercy in baptism and given us to the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

St. John, in his gospel and epistles speaks about being begotten or born of God. Every one ought to know that no man on earth passed through a period of gestation in God, and then he labored and brought him forth. The Apostle means only to say that by faith and obedience they are his children by promise. There is no reconstruction of a man in that.

To make a long story short we will here turn away and assert that there is no regeneration, no new birth, no birth of the Spirit on this side of the resurrection. Any contrary view is a plain, unequivocal contradiction of Jesus Christ. He says, John 3:6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' What sense is there then in talking about the New Birth having already taken place and asserting that men are born of the Spirit, when that which is of the Spirit is spirit, and men are still flesh, have their sinful passions, lusts, hates, satanic ambitions and tendency to do evil as they always had? We are born of God in promise only, and the *born of water* in John 3rd chapter is no more nor less than water baptism, a present type of our burial as Christ was buried and our resurrection as he was resurrected. The bath of rebirth in Titus 3:5, is the same as the *born of water*. The bath is only preparatory to the rebirth.

Men are converted now, and become children of God by promise. The actual translation into the real presence of Christ in his kingdom is yet to take place.

Let it not be forgotten that the new birth found in the scriptures is first a birth of promise, and at last an actual birth into the glorified kingdom of God. People have come to believe that men are in reality the distinction not being held up, born anew now instead of being simply changed or converted from the error of their way and made subject to the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. It is no error to call this conversion a new birth, but the trouble is many put a construction on it which is misleading in its effects.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Men who keep themselves busy at keeping others straight are never straight themselves.

The United Brethren in possession of the elegant publishing house in Dayton, Ohio, have entered suit to put an end to the controversy about the title.

Send your essays on now; we can use them.

We print an article from the *Cleveland Leader* on Church Unity this week, which was sent us by a brother. We greatly favor church unity, but in reality there is no division of Christ's church now. He has only one church. There are hundreds of man-made sects, indeed, but none of those sects belong to the church of Christ. There are people in many of them who do, while the sects themselves belong to something else. We have no time or money to waste in building up a sect. Our labor and means shall all go toward building up the faith of Jesus.

Christ, during his lifetime fulfilled every requirement of the Mosaic Law perfectly, and therefore he was entitled to a continuous natural life. But he gave up that claim at his death for the benefit of mankind. He became perfect through suffering. This implies that he was not perfect in his entire manhood before he commenced the work the Father had given him to do.

Mary E. Balch writes to the *Indianapolis Journal* concerning an interview published in it with Francis Murphy in which he claims, 'The men who sign my temperance pledge rarely fail to keep it.' In the reply she says that 'taking the facts connected with his and his son's work in Frankfort, Delphi, and other towns in Indiana, where my personal knowledge extends, I doubt if Mr. Murphy could show that five out of a hundred drinking men who signed his pledge kept it, even after they were reported converted. The licensed saloons and depraved appetites of these signers overpowered the combined influence of the church and Mr. Murphy.' She appeals to wives and mothers of the men as witnesses of these facts. And this is no doubt true. Everybody knows that only a small per cent. of habitual drinkers ever keep the pledge in face of the open, legalized saloon, let them try as hard as they will. We would not discourage moral suasion, but mere pledge-signing amounts to little.

Dr. Schaff, the eminent Presbyterian scholar and theologian, declares:

'As to the mode of administering this ordinance: immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original normal form. This is shown by the very meaning of the Greek words, *baptizo*, *baptisma*, *baptismos*, used to designate the rite. Then again, by the analogy of the baptism of John, which was performed in the Jordan. Furthermore, by the New Testament comparisons of baptism with the passage through the Red Sea, with the flood, with a bath, with a burial and resurrection. Finally, by the general usage of ecclesiastical antiquity, which was always immersion.'

It is a very common idea that the judgment will take place in a few minutes, and that there will be but two classes. The general tendency of revelation favors the view that the judgment will continue over one thousand years, and there are several classes who will appear there. There will be the saints made perfect and immortal at the resurrection of the just, when Christ shall come; then the good and sinners will arise during the thousand years and they will be sheep and goats, and at the end of the thousand years the goats will be destroyed with eternal destruction in the lake of fire and brimstone, and the good, though not immortal, will continue to live on the new heaven and new earth, in a paradise such as Adam was placed in. The saints, who have kept the faith of Jesus, having received immortality in the first resurrection, will be as God, subject to no law, no authority, and bound by no ties to any specified sphere or place. They will be wholly spiritual as Christ. It will be in the millennium age when the little good a man does will receive its reward, although the doer may deny Christ in this world; again, many do good who never learned of Christ, and they will receive their reward also.

'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment and condemn this generation,' says Christ. The generation referred to is the generation of vipers, or in the language of the literal translation, brood of venomous serpents, which is the army of Satan on the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise because she repented at the preaching of Jonah. It appears that the righteous shall be witnesses against the wicked at judgment, and condemn them to punishment. Those will be the days when the holy can raise a shout of triumph.

We venture our brethren in Lathrop, California, were a little aroused last week. David S. Terry was shot dead in one of the hotels in the town. Terry was a rebel and an ex-judge and a mur-